

Appl. No. 10/625,372
Amdt. Dated : 14 March 2005 (Monday)
Reply to Office Action of: December 14, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 -5 and 7 - 12 are pending in the application.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesy of the telephone interview on September 6, 2005.

The Examiner and the undersigned discussed how Applicant's claim 1 (now amended, as discussed below) differs from the arrangement disclosed in the cited reference to Bovi, and in particular to the requirement of Applicant's claim 1 that the means to protect against wrapping must be rotatable about a shaft portion that is driven by the gear mechanism (see also Applicant's specification, page 7, lines 20 and 21).

In this regard, the Examiner's attention is respectfully directed to Fig. 2 of Bovi, as well as to column 3, lines 9 – 33. As disclosed, the gear 77 has two axle shafts 14, which are rotatably mounted relative to the casing via ball bearings 15 disposed in bushings 16 in the casing. Mounted on the axle shafts 14 are the ring 18, the hoeing rotor 19, the spacer 192, and the end ring 193; these components are all clamped together by the single threaded through rod 300. In order for the hoeing rotors 19 and 191 to be driven, they must be fixedly connected with the driven axle shaft 14; otherwise, it would not be possible to drive them via the gear 77, and the hoe of Bovi would not be functional. In addition, as indicated in column 3, lines 24 – 26, of Bovi, the hexagonal projections 200 of the spacer 192 engage in the hexagonal holes 201 of the hoeing rotors 19 and 191, as a consequence of which the spacer 192 is fixedly connected with the hoeing rotors. Therefore, when the axle shaft 14 rotates the hoeing rotors 19 and 191, the spacer 192 is of course rotated along with them. Thus, contrary to the Examiner's assessment of Bovi, there can be

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no relative movement between the driven axle shaft 14 and the spacer 192. Thus, the spacer 192 is not rotatable about the driven axle shaft 14, as required by Applicant's claim 1, since the spacer 192 must rotate along with the hoing rotors 19 and 191, and the driven axle shaft 14 rotates the rotors.

During the aforementioned interview, the Examiner indicated that claim 1 should be clarified to indicate that the "rotatable" distinction, namely that the relative rotation between the means to protect against wrapping and the driven shaft portion, takes place in the assembled state, i.e. "during operation". This clarification has been added to claim 1. With regard thereto, Applicant respectfully submits that since claim 1 already indicated that the shaft is driven, the claim in its original form already inherently included such an explanation and the addition of the clarifying language "during operation" would not entail new issues.

Applicant believes that in view of the foregoing the present application should now be in condition for allowance. However, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call from him in order to resolve any outstanding issues and to expedite placement of the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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5 of 5

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